

Sustainable Land Development Code: Zoning/Density

SUMMARY:

Santa Fe County's Sustainable Land Development Code (SLDC) draft will establish zoning that regulates residential density and commercial intensity. The zoning regulations will implement concepts from the Sustainable Growth Management Plan (SGMP) related to future land use categories and Sustainable Development Areas (SDA). The proposed zoning regulations related to residential densities to be adopted as part of the SLDC will be based on a number of considerations related to development suitability. These include directing more dense growth to areas served by surface water and adequate public facilities and services and a reliable water supply. The current regulations related to residential densities outside of planned districts are based almost exclusively on perceived groundwater supply.

EXISTING CODE ZONING AND DENSITY:

Outside of existing planned districts (Community Plan Districts, Traditional Community Districts, Community College District, Highway Corridor Districts, the base zoning for the County is residential with density determined by the 1980 hydrologic zones, groundwater supply determined by hydrologic study and water conservation adjustments. Agricultural uses are allowed anywhere in County.

Commercial zoning is currently allowed through a rezoning process in accordance with proposed or existing commercial nodes associated with road classifications usually at major intersections or where commercial development already exists.

PROPOSED ZONING AND DENSITY:

As part of the SLDC, the County is drafting new Base Zones related to future land use categories established in the SGMP which will regulate residential densities, general uses and development standards for allowed uses. The SGMP established the SDA's to maintain a balanced, sustainable land use pattern based on the availability, timing, adequacy and equitable funding of necessary infrastructure and services. SDA 1 establishes a priority growth area to accommodate new compact development which will be served by surface water or community system and adequate public facilities and services. SDA 2 areas will accommodate future development including infill development that is likely and reasonable to occur within the limits of groundwater availability. SDA 3 areas identify low density agricultural land, environmentally sensitive land and conservation areas.

SDA 1: Residential densities and mixed use and commercial development intensities in the SDA 1 area or areas that are covered by planned districts will be determined by a variety of factors including:

- Surface Water
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Adequate Public Facilities and Services
- Adjacent uses and densities
- Compatibility to surrounding development,
- Development type

SDA 2 and 3: Proposed Base Zones for land use categories in SDA 2 and 3 for areas that are not currently covered by a Planned Community District, Traditional Community District, Corridor District or where surface water is not available will be parcel based and have residential densities that will closely match existing densities which are based on the 1980 hydrologic zones. Once the Base Zones are established, there will be mechanisms for changing densities based on sustainable development patterns including clustered housing and sustainable groundwater supply.

Mixed Use and Commercial Development in SDA 1, 2 and 3

The SLDC will also establish Mixed Use and Commercial Development Districts that will implement the mixed use residential and mixed-use non-residential land use as identified in the SGMP Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The Mixed Use Zoning Districts are identified in the FLUM for SDA 1 and can be established in SDA 2 or 3 through a Planned Development District or rezoning.

In addition to the proposed Mixed Use Zoning Districts, the County may identify areas appropriate for industrial development. The SLDC will include an industrial Zoning District that can be established according to locational criteria such as proximity to major transit corridors, compatibility with adjacent uses, adequate public facilities and services and performance standards related to sustainability, safety, health and welfare.

Uses

Permitted, Conditional and Prohibited uses for each Base Zone and Zoning District will be established in the SLDC through a Use Table. Development Standards will also be established for each use which may vary by base zone or zoning district. Planned Development Districts, Area Plans or Community Planning Districts may establish permitted, conditional and prohibited uses.

Mechanisms for Change

Once proposed Base Zones and Zoning Districts are established through the SLDC, how can changes be made?

- Through a Rezoning Process, (Generally applies to a single parcel of land in common ownership).
- As part of an adopted Area Plan or District Plan, (Generally covers large areas with numerous properties and is adopted as an amendment to the SGMP).
- As part of an adopted Community Plan, (Provides specific planning, design and implementation for any traditional, contemporary or other community).
- As part of an adopted Specific Plan or Planned Development District, (Generally applies to a particular property or properties with a variety of land uses and accompanies a development approval. It refines the policies of the SGMAP relating to a defined geographic area and has an emphasis on implementation).
- Densities can also be changed based on sustainable development patterns and performance standards.